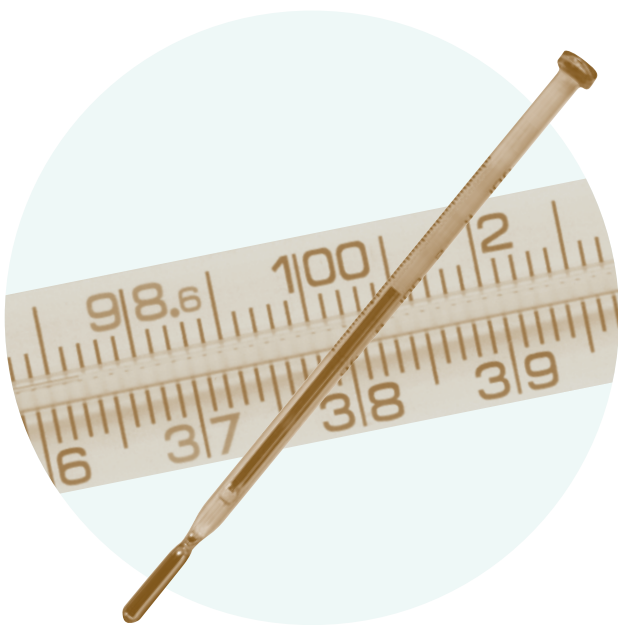


MEDICAL WASTE — MERCURY THERMOMETERS

Improper disposal can result in serious harm to humans, animals, and the environment.



SAFE DISPOSAL

CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

WHAT ARE MERCURY THERMOMETERS?

Not all thermometers contain mercury.

Mercury thermometers can be identified by the silver liquid inside. A red liquid usually indicates an alcohol thermometer.

WHY IS IMPROPER DISPOSAL DANGEROUS?

Mercury is a naturally occurring, highly toxic, heavy metal that moves between water, air, and soil as a result of natural and human activities. It is a persistent and bioaccumulative toxin (PBT), which means that it accumulates in animals and people, becoming more concentrated as it moves up the food chain, causing harm to people and the environment.

When a mercury thermometer breaks, the mercury vaporizes, posing an immediate and serious health risk. If mercury is inhaled or absorbed through the skin, it can damage the central nervous system, especially during fetal and childhood development.

HOW CAN I SAFELY DISPOSE OF MERCURY THERMOMETERS?

- Replace mercury thermometers with non-mercury alternatives such as a digital, solar, alcohol, or card thermometer. Mercury thermometers should not be discarded in the trash, flushed down the toilet, or left on the side of a road.
- Take to any of the county's hazardous waste facilities or collection events.

For disposal locations and collection information, please see back of brochure.

CLEANING UP A BROKEN MERCURY THERMOMETER

Do not vacuum!

Make sure the spill area is adequately ventilated.

Wear rubber gloves to prevent skin contact. Keep hands away from your face—especially eyes, nose, and mouth.

Isolate the spill immediately. If it is on a raised surface, contain it so that mercury doesn't roll onto the floor. Divert spilled mercury from drains, cracks, and crevices.

Carefully pick up broken glass. Wrap or fold in a paper towel or tissue and place in a leak-proof plastic bag.

Working from the outside of the spill area toward the center, push small mercury beads together with a card, stiff paper, or squeegee to form larger droplets. Use an eyedropper or two stiff pieces of paper to pick up droplets and place into a leak-proof plastic bag.

Use the sticky side of duct or masking tape (two inches or wider) to pick up remaining glass and mercury droplets. Pay special attention to cracks or crevices in tile or wood floors. Place the glass, mercury, and tape into the same leak-proof bag.

Using a flashlight, look all around the area of the spill. The light will reflect off the mercury beads, making it easier to see them. Pick up any droplets using the procedure above.

When finished, carefully remove the rubber gloves and place them in the leak-proof plastic bag.

Place all mercury-containing clean-up debris (gloves, tape, mercury, etc. contained in a leak-proof plastic bag) into another leak-proof plastic bag, twist or snap shut, and seal the opening with tape.

Take the bag to a household hazardous waste collection facility or collection event.

Solid Waste Planning and Programs are a cooperative effort of Clark County, Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, Yacolt, and La Center.



HOW CAN I SAFELY DISPOSE OF MERCURY THERMOMETERS?

Take mercury thermometers or any items containing mercury to one of the following locations:

Central Transfer and Recycling Center

11034 N.E. 117th Avenue, Vancouver

(360) 256-8482

Saturday & Sunday, 8 A.M. – 4 P.M.

West Van Materials Recovery Center

6601 N.W. Old Lower River Road, Vancouver

(360) 737-1727

Friday & Saturday, 8 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Philip Services Corporation

625 S. 32nd Street, Washougal

(360) 835-8594

First Tuesday, 10:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Mobile Collection Events

Call Clark County Public Works

(360) 397-6118 ext. 4352

For more information about unwanted medical waste and other household hazardous wastes, please call (360) 397-6118 ext. 4352 or visit www.clark.wa.gov and click on Solid Waste and Recycling.



For an alternative format, contact the Clark County ADA Compliance Office.
Voice (360) 397-2025 TTY (360) 397-2445 E-mail ADA@clark.wa.gov



Recycled



Recyclable

Printed on 100 percent recycled paper containing
50 percent post-consumer waste.